

# Planning Commission Workshop



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## STAFF REPORT

## DRAFT AMENDMENTS FOR RV PARKS AND CAMPGROUNDS

**Date:** June 2, 2023

**Staff:** Preston Pinkston, Planner  
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**Attachments:** A – Proposed Amendments to LCC 17.10, Definitions  
B – Proposed Amendments to LCC 17.144, RV Parks and Campgrounds  
C – Proposed Amendments to LCC 16.04, Definitions  
D – Proposed Amendments to LCC 17.30.460, Accessory Uses (Resource Lands)  
E – Proposed Amendments to LCC 16.14, Recreational Vehicle Park Divisions  
F – Proposed Amendments to LCC 17.42, Zoning Summary

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## SUMMARY

Currently, development regulations for RV Parks and Campgrounds are found in Title 16, Subdivisions, of the Lewis County Code (LCC). This is not the correct location because RV parks and campgrounds are not subdivisions, they are a land use. Therefore, the development regulations for RV parks and campgrounds are being removed from Title 16 and added to Title 17, Land Use and Development Regulations.

In addition, the existing Title 16 development regulations include many requirements that are duplicative of other code sections and in some cases create a conflict. Duplicative requirements are being removed. It should be noted, all code sections of the LCC may be applied to any proposed development; there is no need to say, "all other code sections apply." For example, if there is a proposed public or private road, then the development regulations regarding the road apply without restating that the regulations apply.

## PROPOSED CODE AMENDMENTS

The proposed amendments are found in Attachments A through F, as well as summarized below by topic. The new code is Chapter 17.144, RV Parks and Campgrounds. Note, the best way to read the code amendments on a computer is in 2-page format where the commentary is on the left and the code is on the right. In this format the commentary will directly explain the amendments.

### Definitions

The definitions related to RV parks and campgrounds are being removed from Chapter 16.04 and added to Chapter 17.10. In addition, new definitions are added to Chapter 17.10 to clarify words used in the development regulations. New definitions included: cabin, primitive campground, dispersed camping, camper club, lodging unit, tent, transient accommodations and yurt.

### Review Process

Currently all RV parks and campgrounds are required to have a Binding Site Plan. The process is changed to allow new RV parks and campground through a Special Use Permit, no Binding Site Plan required. This is appropriate because RV parks and campgrounds do not need the level of review required by a Binding Site Plan and it reduces the time and money it takes for an applicant to have their proposal reviewed. A Special Use Permit still requires public notice and is decided by the Hearings Examiner.

### Thresholds

Clarification is added that if the RV park/campground will have sites that can be individually leased and transferred to another person, then it is a "camper club". Camper clubs are considered a Master Planned Resort and must comply with Chapter 17.20E, Master Planned Resort, instead of 17.144. In addition, if the allowed density standards of 17.144 are exceeded, then the RV park/campground must meet Chapter 17.20E, Master Planned Resort, requirements. For example, if the owner/operator would like more than 25% of the camping sites to be occupied by a cabin or yurt, then the RV park/campground must meet the Master Planned Resort requirements. Please see Density, below, for further explanation.

Clarification is also added that if any camping site is occupied by an RV with a single person/entity for 181 days or more, then the RV park/campground is considered a Mobile Home Park and must comply with Chapter 15.30, Mobile Home Parks, instead of 17.144. Please see Length of Stay, below, for further explanation.

### Density

A *new* addition to the code allows for no more than 25% of the camping sites to be occupied by a cabin or yurt, provided that the cabin/yurt is no more than 400 sq ft in size. This allows a "park model" for RV parks and campgrounds, thus expanding the diversity of lodging offered. An example of how this is calculated is if there are 25 camping sites total, then no more than 6 of those may be occupied by a cabin or yurt. The remaining 19 must be RV or tent camping.

There is also a *new* allowance for an owner/operator who wants to create a tent-only campground. They may create a higher density of camping sites than is required for a campground that allows both RVs and tents.

### Length of Stay

Currently depending on the type of RV park/campground, users may stay up to 60 days or 180 days. The *new* code will allow people to stay up to 180 days at all RV parks and campgrounds, which is 6 months. This is to allow seasonal employees to live at a RV park/campground. If the owner/operator of the RV park/campground allows a single person or entity to stay for 181 or longer, then the RV park/campground is considered a Mobile Home Park and must meet regulations related to that use.

Cabins or yurts may only be occupied for up to 30 days. This is consistent with the state's definition of short term rentals, which are transient accommodations for stays no longer than 30 days.

### Caretaker Accommodations

The *new* code allows one camping site to be occupied by a permanent RV or cabin for use by a caretaker, ranger or manager of the RV park/campground. If this is a cabin or yurt, then it does count towards the allowance for cabins. However, it does not count towards the threshold for a Mobile Home Park. In addition, the cabin may be up to 1,296 sq ft in size (as opposed to the maximum 400 sq ft size for transient cabins.)

### Accessory Uses

The current code is silent on accessory uses such as a swimming pool, "snack shack" or convenience store. Accessory uses are called out in the *new* code as an allowed use when in aid of and completely contained within the RV park or campground.

### Screening and Buffering

Screening and buffering is required by the current regulations, but is clarified in the *new* code to require the screening to be a minimum of 6 feet high and that it obscure at least 80% visibility from adjacent properties. This will reduce the off-site visual impacts of RV parks/campgrounds on their surrounding neighbors. There is an allowance for a waterbody, such as a river or lake, to be used as the buffer and screening.

### Removed

The following requirements were duplicative and removed: SEPA review, significant natural features, roads, bridges, signs, drainage, off-site impacts and solid waste. Again, there are existing requirements in the LCC that will apply regardless and there is no need to repeat or reference those in the new Chapter 17.144. When codes are repeated there is a danger that one section of LCC will get updated and another section will be forgotten, creating a conflict between codes.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission transmit the proposed amendments presented in Attachments A through F (LCC 17.10, Definitions, 17.144, RV Parks and Campgrounds, 16.04, Definitions, 17.30.460, Accessory Uses (Resource Lands), 16.14, Recreational Vehicle Park Divisions, and 17.42, Zoning Summary) to the Board of County Commissions for review and consideration.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Planning Commission is scheduled to hold a second workshop on June 27, 2023. After which, the commissioners may decide to proceed to a public hearing on July 25, 2023.

After close of the public hearing, the Planning Commission may deliberate and vote to transmit the proposed amendments to the Board of County Commission. After the Board of County Commissioners reviews the proposal, they will hold a public hearing before voting to adopt the amendments.